



The National Planning Commission:

Draft National Development Plan

Chapter 9 on Education

This course is still a study in Development. It is not a running commentary on the NDP's progress. The writing below is an edited version of the previous iteration of this course. It refers to the NDP draft of mid-2011, and the attached document is an extract from Chapter 9 of the draft, called in full "Improving Education, Training and Innovation".

The current version of the full Education chapter (613 KB) can be downloaded [by clicking here](#).

As with most, but not all, of the other chapters of the NDP draft, this one was practically impossible to summarise,

because it was an eclectic mixture of points pulled out of the thin air of bourgeois common sense.

It had no organic integrity at all, let alone any sense of a unity-and-struggle-of-opposites that would drive education forward in a way that corresponds to the dialectical nature of human history. This chapter exposes the National Planning Commission's lack of a founding concept of humanistic development. The NPC appeared to be trapped within bourgeois utilitarianism, which is only a little better than bourgeois post-modernism.

This document was of the "end of history" variety. It anticipated no qualitative change, but sought only relative improvement. As well as having no revolutionary perspective, it is unable to anticipate the inevitable periodic "crises", or even to take into account the one that we already have, the so-called "meltdown" that still continues to get worse and more threatening.

Not being historical, and so being trapped in its time, the document became a barely-disguised intervention in current attacks by the DA on SADTU. The National Planning Commission had lazily assumed that the projection until 2030 is doomed to stay within the narrow concerns of the mostly-white constituency, represented by Helen Zille and her cohorts.

SADTU issued a statement on 13 November 2012, taking issue with a number of the many bullet-points in the NDP

draft. Here are three of SADTU's responses:

Political and union interference in appointments:

SADTU's role is that of ensuring that proper processes are followed in the appointment/promotion of teachers and district officials. The recommendation should deal with those responsible for employment such as the SGB and the District office to perform their duties in the best interest of our country and not to allow improper influence.

Increase teacher training by Funza Lushaka bursaries:

While we welcome the bursaries, we maintain that we don't believe that the universities have the capacity to train the number of teachers needed. Our universities have abandoned research in favour of making profits. We therefore reiterate our call for the re-opening of teacher colleges to have focused and dedicated training.

Regular testing of teachers: The regular testing of teachers in subjects they teach is an insult to teachers. Instead, teachers should undergo regular refresher courses on the subjects they teach. The recommendation is based on preconceived ideas and not on the reality faced by teachers. This will add to the low morale the teachers are already suffering from because the policies are de-professionalizing teaching.

The National Planning Commission was not assembled on the basis of any common theoretical understanding. Clearly, it failed to build such an understanding. Perhaps it never attempted to do so. Consequently, it only managed to descend to its lowest common denominator, made up of *ad hoc* common sense and the fashionable ideas of the day. In the case of Education, this means that the National Development Plan is just about as "uneducated" as it could be.

In the next instalment, on Health, we will see that the situation was not quite the same, because the prevailing ideas are much more theoretically well developed. On Health, the NPC soaked up some good material and was able to use it in the NDP.

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- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [National Plan, C9, Education - extract](#).
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